

SERIES TITLE: BIBLE ANSWERS

PART ONE: ABOUT THE GREAT TRIBULATION

TEXT: MATTHEW 24

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

This series addresses some frequently asked questions. The four subjects are: The Tribulation, Paranormal Activity, Predestination, and Hell. We will look at what the Bible has to say about each of these topics, and how the truth applies to our lives today.

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

It is Passover week in Jerusalem, Jesus' last week on earth before his crucifixion. Jesus and his disciples have been in the Temple, where Jesus has repeatedly critiqued the ways of the scribes and Pharisees. Leaving Jerusalem, he weeps over the city before leading his followers to the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron Valley. There he delivers what is often called the Olivet Discourse, a lengthy discussion of the signs of his return and the end of the age.

FOCUS QUESTION

Share any stories you know of believers who have been persecuted for their faith.

EXAMINATION

Although the Bible refers to at least four different types of tribulation, focus your discussion on these two:

1. Tribulation because you are a Christian. Read John 16:33; Matthew 13:21; Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12.
 - What does this tribulation look like?
 - Why does it happen?
 - Why do we or don't we experience it?
 - How is it possible to respond like the apostles did in Acts 5:41?
2. The intense persecution of believers immediately before Christ's return. Read Revelation 7:9-14.
 - What can we learn from this passage about "the great tribulation" and these people who have come out of it?
 - Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9 with Revelation 13. How are these evil characters similar?
 - What do they do to God's people?

Jesus also described a future time of Great Tribulation (recorded by Mathew, Mark and Luke). Some of what he predicts happened a few years later when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army. Some of it didn't happen yet. Bible students don't agree on how this should be understood. Jesus seems to have been talking about what his disciples would experience in their lifetimes, and what future disciples will experience at the end of time.

- Matthew 24:1-3 What do the disciples want to know and why?
- Matthew 24:4-8 What does Jesus mean by "the beginning of birth pains"?
- Matthew 24:9-14 How much of this did those disciples personally experience?
- Matthew 24:15 Entire books have been written on this verse. What could Jesus be referring to? (see Daniel 9:25-27)
- Matthew 24:16-22 Do you think Jesus is describing something still in our future? Why or why not?
- Matthew 24:23-31 What does this teach us about the coming of the Son of Man?

EXPLORATION

- Daniel 7:9-14
- Daniel 12:1-3
- Zephaniah 1:14-2:3
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
- Revelation 19:11-21

APPLICATION.

- Romans 5:13 says "rejoice in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation produces patience." What does this mean? Can you think of a time this was true in your life?

- If you were alive during the time of “Great Tribulation,” what would you be doing differently than you are today?
- How would church change if we were in the time of “Great Tribulation”?
- Whether we go through none, some, or much of the Tribulation, how does 1 Thessalonians 5:9 encourage us?
- Romans 12:12 says “Be patient in tribulation.” How can we obey that?

SUMMATION

- Fact: What is a key truth that you understood from this passage?
- React: What did you feel?
- Act: What are you going to do?